

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02
ACDA-07 /090 W

-----058682 231726Z /44

R 231150Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7463
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VALLETTA 0711

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, IT, MT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN/FRENCH/LIBYAN DIALOGUE WITH MINTOFF

REF: VALLETTA 0707,

1. REFTEL GIVES LATEST WE HAVE ON MINTOFF'S DIALOGUE
WITH NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ENDS OF HIS NEUTRALITY/BRIDGE
CONCEPT FOR MALTA AFTER 1979. SOURCE IS AGAIN ITALIAN
AMBASSADOR DA-RIN. I HAVE ASKED TO SEE MINTOFF TO GET A
DIRECT VERSION FOR A CHANGE BUT HAVE NO ASSURANCE OF
SEEING HIM SOON AND CERTAINLY NOT THIS WEEK, GIVEN MY
LACK OF CREDENTIALS AS A SOCIALIST, MUCH LESS A
"PROGRESSIVE" ONE.

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2. IN GIVING ME HIS REPORT, DA-RIN PROFESSED TO BE MORE
TROUBLED THAN USUAL THAT TIME MAY BE RUNNING OUT.
NOTING HE WAS NOT SPEAKING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, HE SAID
THAT ALTHOUGH HE FEELS MINTOFF IS STILL TRYING SINCERELY
TO MAINTAIN EQUIDISTANCE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUGHT, HE ALSO
SENSES THAT LIBYAN ALTERNATIVE IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY

MORE DIFFICULT TO RESIST. HE THEREFORE BELIEVES WE CANNOT INDEFINITELY CALL MINTOFF'S BLUFF BY DELAYS. BELIEVES GOI WILL SOON BEGIN WHAT HE CALLED "PILGRIMAGE" AROUND EC-9 TO SEE WHAT CAN BE PUT TOGETHER. DOUBTS MUCH CAN BE HAD FROM FRENCH, THINKS APPROACH SHOULD BE MADE TO EVEN SMALLEST MEMBERS OF NINE, HAS "ABOUT GIVEN UP" ON BRITS, BUT BELIEVES GERMANS ARE READY TO HELP. (LOCAL GERMAN AMBASSADOR SAYS HE THINKS SO, TOO, IN PRINCIPLE, BUT AT FAR LOWER LEVEL THAN MALTESE WANT AND ONLY AS PART OF "WESTERN" EFFORT, INCLUDING U.S.). DA-RIN APPEALED FOR U.S. "OPEN-MINDEDNESS", ADDING HE EXPECTS ANDREOTTI WILL RAISE MALTA WITH PRESIDENT WHEN HE VISITS WASHINGTON IN JULY.

3. IF I CAN SUMMARIZE WHAT THIS EMBASSY FEELS ABOUT ALL THIS IT IS THAT WHILE LIBYANS HAVE THE CASH AND THE EASE OF QADHAFI DECISION-MAKING TO MAKE THE LIBYAN OPTION APPEAR ATTRACTIVE (ESPECIALLY IN THIS WEEK'S HEADY COMPANY OF JALLUD AND OTHER "PROGRESSIVE MEDITERRANEAN SOCIALISTS"), HE IS ALSO NO FOOL - EITHER ABOUT JEOPARDIZING WHAT HE KNOWS EUROPE CAN OFFER OVER THE LONGER TERM OR ABOUT ANTAGONIZING A LOCAL BODY POLITIC AMONG WHOM LIBYA REMAINS DECIDEDLY UNPOPULAR. MOREOVER MINTOFF'S OWN MUCH BALLYHOOED CONCEPT FOR MAKING MALTA THE CENTER OF A "SEA OF PEACE" REQUIRES AT LEAST AN EQUAL EUROPEAN PARTICIPATION OR IT LOOSES MUCH OF ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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RATIONALE.

4. CONSEQUENTLY WE BELIEVE OUR CURRENT POSTURE IS STILL RIGHT, A POSTURE OF ENCOURAGING THE EUROPEANS COOLLY AND DELIBERATELY TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS LOOKING TOWARD A PACKAGE OF SUPPORT FOR MALTA THAT BALANCES AT LEAST IN PART THE LIBYAN ROLE. WE WOULD COUNSEL A CHANGE IN THAT POSTURE ONLY IF ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING NEW CONDITIONS WERE TO APPLY:

(A) A CHANGE IN OUR OWN STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT THAT WE CAN LIVE WITHOUT ACCESS SO LONG AS THERE IS SOVIET DENIAL. WE ASSUME THERE HAS BEEN NO SUCH CHANGE.

(B) A CONCLUSION THAT THE GROWING LIBYAN INFLUENCE HERE IS EITHER IN ITSELF DETRIMENTAL TO OUR STRATEGIC INTERESTS OR THAT, AT LEAST IN TIME, THIS LIBYAN INFLUENCE COULD RESULT IN SOVIET INFLUENCE BY LIBYAN PROXY. FROM OUR PAROCHIAL VIEWPOINT WE DON'T LIKE WHAT WE SEE OF LIBYAN INFLUENCE BUT IT IS AS YET AT LEAST MORE AN IRRITANT THAN ANYTHING SERIOUS, AND WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE AS YET OF THE SOVIET PROXY. BUT WE DEFER TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR ITS ASSESSMENT OF THE LONGER TERM

IMPLICATIONS OF LIBYA'S AREA INFLUENCE UNDER QADHAFI.

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(C) A JUDGMENT THAT MINTOFF MIGHT BE BOUGHT, I.E. THAT HIS COMMITMENT TO HIS NEUTRALITY CONCEPT IS NOT SO TOTAL THAT WE COULD NOT WIN HIM OVER WITH AID OVERTURES OF OUR OWN. BUT MINTOFF HAS BEEN CONSISTENT FOR YEARS ON HIS CONCEPT. WE SENSE NO CHANGE. THE LIBYAN OPTION (AND THE LEVERAGE ON MINTOFF) IS TOO ATTRACTIVE. ANY EFFORT ON OUR PART TO BUY OFF MINTOFF WOULD IN ANY EVENT REQUIRE RESOURCES WELL BEYOND WHAT WE ASSUME WE COULD REALISTICALLY OR SENSIBLY OFFER.

5. IF THE DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT NONE OF THESE CONDITIONS APPLY, WE CONCLUDE THAT THIS COUNSELS A CONTINUED POLICY OF NON-INVOLVEMENT, IN WHICH WE MAKE CLEAR TO OUR EUROPEAN FRIENDS THAT WE BELIEVE IT BOTH NATURAL AND FEASIBLE THAT THEY CARRY THE DIRECT FINANCIAL

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BURDEN OF WHATEVER IS NEEDED REALISTICALLY TO HELP MALTA WEATHER THE END OF THE NATO SUBSIDY. THERE IS IN ANY EVENT THE LACK OF MUCH LOGIC IN ANY ARGUMENT THAT WE SHOULD PAY TO HELP FINANCE A CONCEPT THAT HAS AS ONE OF ITS MORE PUBLICIZED PURPOSES THE EXPULSION OF THE 6TH FLEET FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN.

6. BUT TOO MUCH LOGIC CAN CANCEL OUT OPTIONS THAT OUGHT USEFULLY BE KEPT OPEN. THEREFORE WE DO NOT RULE OUT ENTIRELY SOME U.S. CONTRIBUTION IN WHAT IS DEVELOPED FOR THE POST 1979 PERIOD, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THAT THE POSSIBILITY (AND IN TIME THE ACTUALITY) OF A U.S. CONTRIBUTION COULD YET BE INSTRUMENTAL IN INFLUENCING THE LONGER TERM EVOLUTION HERE. EW CAN MAKE A BETTER JUDGMENT ON THAT OPTION, HOWEVER, AFTER UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S VISIT HERE AND AFTER GETTING THE ITALIAN POLITICAL LEVEL VIEW AT THE TIME ANDREOTTI VISITS WASHINGTON. WE HAVE NO STRONG VIEWS OURSELVES WHETHER THE UNDER SECRETARY'S VISIT SHOULD PRECEDE OR FOLLOW WHATEVER EXCHANGE OCCURS WITH ANDREOTTI ON THE MALTA PROBLEM. WE THINK IT SHOULD BE REASONABLY SOON BUT IN THE CONTEXT OF A BROADER AREA ITINERARY SO THAT IT IS NOT SEEN AS A SPECIAL PILGRIMAGE TO DOM.
LAINGEN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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